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1911  
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# THE IMMUNITY BATH

A THREE-ACT DRAMA

BY

ROBERT A. KASPER

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CAST.

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FRANK GILMORE, general manager Western railroad.

Mrs. GILMORE, his wife.

FLORENCE, }  
MARIE, } their daughters.

JANE, their maid.

JOHN SIMMS, general superintendent Western railroad.

MICHAEL MURPHY, superintendent of machinery, Western railroad.

ELBERT WORTHING, state's attorney.

WILLIAM WORTHING, his son.

ACT I.

LIBRARY IN THE GILMORE HOME. 5 P. M.

ACT II.

SAME. ONE WEEK LATER. 7:15 P. M.

ACT III.

SAME.

TIME—The Present.

PLACE—Any city.

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NOTE.—No time elapses between acts two and three. The characters are found in the same positions at the opening of act three as they were left at the close of act two.

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SETTING: *A very elaborate library scene. Drapery hung doors center and right. Library table center. Telephone on table and chairs right and left of table. Library chair right of center. Stool before chair. Bookcase along back wall, right. Desk left. Fireplace set in left wall. Davenport near fireplace. Other accessories about the room.*



# THE IMMUNITY BATH.

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## ACT I.

LIBRARY IN THE GILMORE HOME. 5 P. M.

*(The curtain rises upon an empty stage. A slight pause when the telephone bell rings. Jane enters right, crosses to table center and takes receiver off hook.)*

JANE (*at 'phone*)—Hello. Who is this? The editor of The Tribune. Mr. Gilmore is not in—Yes—Just a minute. (*Puts down receiver and exits right. A slight pause. Mrs. Gilmore enters right, crosses to table and takes up receiver. She is forty years old.*)

MRS. GILMORE (*at 'phone*)—Hello. Yes.—Mr. Gilmore hasn't come home yet. He ought to be here very soon.

*(Florence Gilmore and William Worthing enter center as Mrs. Gilmore hangs up the receiver. Florence is seventeen years of age, while William is twenty.)*

FLORENCE—Was that for me, mother?

MRS. GILMORE—The editor of The Tribune called.

FLORENCE (*excited*)—For me?

MRS. GILMORE—No, my dear. He asked for your father.

FLORENCE—Oh, shucks! I thought the mean old thing wanted to explain why he didn't print that society notice I sent in last week.

WILLIAM (*innocently*)—He may write you, Flo.

FLORENCE—You're trying to make fun of me. He owes me an explanation, just the same.

WILLIAM—Honestly, Florence, I wasn't trying to make fun of you. Was I, Mrs. Gilmore?

MRS. GILMORE—Of course he wasn't Florence. How did you like the show?

FLORENCE—Oh, dandy, mother! Ethel Barrymore was just fine, and her leading man was the grandest creature! I could love him! (*William assumes offended attitude and crosses*

right. Neither mother nor daughter, who stand center, notice him.)

FLORENCE (*to mother*)—Guess who sat in a box at the performance.

Mrs. GILMORE—Who?

FLORENCE—Oh, you ought to guess.

Mrs. GILMORE—Goodness, how am I to know?

FLORENCE—Well, I suppose I'll have to tell you. Mrs. Farnum.

Mrs. GILMORE—You don't say! How did she look?

FLORENCE—Scrumptious! Her divorce seems to have agreed with her.

Mrs. GILMORE—Shame on you talking that way, Florence.

FLORENCE—That's what I thought. No use being a hypocrit, Is there, Will? (*She turns to William and notices his offended attitude. William does not answer Florence's question, but stands sulking.*) Well, what in the world happened to you?

WILLIAM—Oh, nothing.

Mrs. GILMORE—What's the matter, Will?

WILLIAM—Nothing, Mrs. Gilmore.

Mrs. GILMORE (*smiling*)—You certainly act it.

WILLIAM—There's nothing the matter with me, Mrs. Gilmore. Honestly, there's nothing the matter.

Mrs. GILMORE—Now I am convinced there isn't. (*Smiles.*)

FLORENCE—Well, if there isn't anything the matter, why didn't you answer my question?

WILLIAM—I didn't know you asked one.

FLORENCE—You know very well I did.

WILLIAM—Well, if you know, you know. That's all.

FLORENCE—If I had your disposition, I'd pose for liver pill advertisements. Before taking. (*Makes grimace with face when reading, "before taking."*)

Mrs. GILMORE—Now don't quarrel, children.

FLORENCE (*to William*)—Are you going to answer my question?

WILLIAM—What was the question?

FLORENCE—I asked if there was any use being a hypocrite?

WILLIAM—How do you suppose I know?

FLORENCE—You know I think there isn't.

WILLIAM—I don't know what you think.

FLORENCE—You certainly do. You see me enough.

WILLIAM—The more you see of a woman, the less you know what she thinks.

FLORENCE—Still taking your grouch out on me, are you?

WILLIAM (*glances at Mrs. Gilmore, then meekly*)—I didn't specify the woman.

FLORENCE—That's better, but it don't excuse you.

Mrs. GILMORE (*jesting*)—I hope you didn't refer to me, Will.

WILLIAM (*startled and forgetting offended attitude*)—Oh, no, no, Mrs. Gilmore.

Mrs. GILMORE (*still jesting*)—I'm inclined to think you did.

WILLIAM (*more startled and completely forgetting offended attitude*)—Why, Mrs. Gilmore. I never dreamed of such a thing. You were farthest from my mind when I made the remark. I hope you don't think I'd speak that way of you. I can't believe you think I would.

FLORENCE—Goody, goody. Make him apologize, mother.

Mrs. GILMORE (*to William*)—If you really didn't mean me. Will, I'll take your word for it; but you must be more careful in future.

WILLIAM—Yes, Mrs. Gilmore. (*Glares at Florence, who is smiling.*)

Mrs. GILMORE (*to William*)—You'll stay for dinner?

FLORENCE—I wouldn't ask him after what he said.

WILLIAM (*again glares at Florence, then to Mrs. Gilmore*)—I'm sorry, but I can't stay this evening. Father has invited Mr. Riley up tonight, and I'm to call for him at five-thirty.

Mrs. GILMORE—How is your father, Will?

WILLIAM—Fine.

Mrs. GILMORE—You'll remember me to him, won't you? And remind him he hasn't been to see Mr. Gilmore and I for over two weeks. I don't believe he has ever let a week pass without calling since Mr. Gilmore and I were married, except immediately after your mother died, when he thought if he came he would only be reminded of the good times the four of us used to have together. And what good times they were. When your father did come again we cheered him and made him forget. He and I have been good old friends since childhood and years haven't hurt that friendship any.

WILLIAM—Father often speaks of you and Mr. Gilmore and of the times you had together. But he has been very busy of late on some sort of a secret investigation. I'll tell him what you said.

Mrs. GILMORE—Do, and have him come over with you some night to dinner.

WILLIAM—I will, Mrs. Gilmore.

Mrs. GILMORE—Don't forget. Good-bye, Will.

WILLIAM—Good-bye, Mrs. Gilmore. (*Mrs. Gilmore exits right. Immediately she has made her exit, William looks off stage, right, to make sure she has gone, then crosses to Florence and confronts her. His offended attitude has returned.*)

WILLIAM—So you could love the leading man in the show, could you? (*Florence looks upon him seriously a moment, then of a sudden laughs heartily.*) That's right, laugh. You might think it's funny, but I don't see the joke.

FLORENCE (*laughs*)—Perhaps your sense of humor needs fixing. (*Laughs.*)

WILLIAM—It's my head needs fixing, falling in love with a base deceiver like you! You're a base deceiver, that's what you are! Just like the rest of the women! You make a man think you're head over heels in love with him and then when you have him in your grasp you pull the string and make him dance like these toy jacks! You're all alike, I tell you; you're all alike!

FLORENCE (*laughs*)—Oh, Will, you're so funny. So that's why you were sulky, because I said I could love the leading man in the show. (*Laughs.*) I'll have to tell mother. (*She crosses to exit, right, but William intercepts her.*)

WILLIAM—If you do, I'll never speak to you again.

FLORENCE—And if I don't?

WILLIAM (*pause*)—Honestly, now, did you mean what you said about the leading man? (*Florence looks at William and smiles. They are standing together, right of center.*) Tell me, Florence, did you?

FLORENCE—Does it really make so much difference?

WILLIAM—All the difference in the world.

FLORENCE—And I'm not a base deceiver?

WILLIAM (*pause*)—Well, no, not if you didn't mean what you said.

FLORENCE (*smiles contentedly*)—Of course I didn't Will. And you're a silly, silly boy to think I did. (*Marie, Florence's nine-year-old sister, enters center. She has her school books in hand. She stands before entrance watching the two lovers. William takes Florence in his arms and kisses her. Marie watches the proceedings, then holds her hand over her mouth to suppress a laugh which is heard, and makes a hurried exit, right, when the lovers turn and discover her. William and Florence look after Marie as she exits laughing. Both cross left, and are rather startled.*)

WILLIAM—Now we've done it. Now everyone will know we're in love.

FLORENCE—Do you really think anyone would ever suspect it?

WILLIAM (*thinks a moment*)—We might say we were practicing a scene from Romeo and Juliet.

FLORENCE—The balcony scene?

WILLIAM—Yes.

FLORENCE (*suddenly becoming angry*)—You're ashamed of me.

WILLIAM—Why do you say that?

FLORENCE—You're always wanting to hide our secret.

WILLIAM—You know that isn't true.

FLORENCE—It is, it is! (*Begins to cry and crosses to downport, left, and sits down, handkerchief to her eyes. 'Phone bell rings.*)

WILLIAM (*has started to cross to Florence, but stops,*



*turns and looks at 'phone*)—Of course, some one has to butt in. (*Turns, looks at Florence, then at 'phone, which is still ringing, and back at Florence.*) Say, for goodness sakes, don't cry until I answer this 'phone. (*'Phone continues to ring during intervals until William answers it. Florence continues to cry. William looks from 'phone to Florence, then speaks to girl feelingly.*) Don't cry, Florence. Please don't cry. You know I'm not ashamed of you. (*Florence continues to cry. William looks at her, then helplessly.*) Go ahead and cry.

FLORENCE (*stops abruptly and looks up*)—I won't!

WILLIAM—You see, as soon as I tell you to do a thing—(*looks helplessly at 'phone, which is still ringing. Crosses to 'phone and takes receiver off hook.*) (*At 'phone*)—Hello. The editor of the Herald. (*Florence takes her handkerchief from her eyes and is all attention.*)

FLORENCE—He wants to speak to me.

WILLIAM (*at 'phone. Gazes at Florence when he reads next line*)—Mr. Gilmore is not in. (*Florence turns away angrily. At 'phone.*)—Just a minute. (*To Florence*)—When will your father be home?

FLORENCE—I'll speak to the editor myself. (*Rises and crosses to 'phone.*)

WILLIAM—Miss Gilmore will speak to you. (*Looks directly at Florence and emphasizes following line*)—You'll excuse me. I've contracted a very bad cold. (*Florence looks angrily at William and literally jerks the receiver out of his hand.*)

FLORENCE (*at 'phone, gushingly*)—Hello, Mr. Editor. This is Florence Gilmore, Mr. Editor. I'm angry with you because you didn't use that society notice I sent you. Not a paper in town printed it. Well, if it was an oversight, I'll mail it for next week. You're filled up. Then the week after. Father ought to be home any minute. Don't forget to print the notice week after next. Well, yes, it would be rather late. You'll print the next one? All right. Good-bye, Mr. Editor. (*Hangs up receiver. She is in a happy frame of mind until she sees Williams. She crosses to davenport and sits down pouting.*)

WILLIAM (*crosses to her*)—You know I wanted to set the date, and everything, but you said I'd have to wait until I became a famous lawyer and made a big reputation. You know I'm not ashamed of you, Florence. (*Florence looks away and does not answer.*) Don't make me unhappy, Florence.

FLORENCE (*pause*)—You're really not ashamed?

WILLIAM—I'm just as proud of you as I can be.

FLORENCE—You mean it?

WILLIAM—Of course I do. (*Sits beside her and kisses her. They look at each other a moment.*)

FLORENCE—I'm angry anyway, Will.

WILLIAM—Why?

FLORENCE—Don't you know?

WILLIAM—No.

FLORENCE—Can't you guess?

WILLIAM—No.

FLORENCE—Now I'm still more angry.

WILLIAM—For goodness sakes, what in the world is wrong now?

FLORENCE—You can't guess?

WILLIAM—No.

FLORENCE (*pause*)—Well, you've been here over ten minutes and you haven't told me.

WILLIAM (*relieved*)—You know I do.

FLORENCE—Tell me.

WILLIAM—I love you.

FLORENCE—How much?

WILLIAM—With all my heart.

FLORENCE—And?

WILLIAM—I'll always love you.

FLORENCE—And?

WILLIAM—I'll never love anybody else.

FLORENCE—And you'll work real hard?

WILLIAM—Yes.

FLORENCE—And we'll have a little flat?

WILLIAM—Yes.

FLORENCE—And I'll prepare all your meals?

WILLIAM (*pretends seriousness, then smiles*)—Yes.

FLORENCE—And you'll come home every night?

WILLIAM (*pretends seriousness, then smiles*)—Yes.

FLORENCE—And we'll never quarrel?

WILLIAM—Yes; I mean no.

FLORENCE—And you'll always let me have my own way?

WILLIAM (*seriously, then somewhat reluctantly*)—Yes.

FLORENCE—Now tell me a little wild west.

WILLIAM—If you ceased loving me I'd kill myself; I mean I'd kill you, then myself. (*They kiss.*)

FLORENCE (*thinks a moment*)—Have I forgotten anything?

WILLIAM—I think not. But you haven't told me.

FLORENCE—I love you.

WILLIAM—How much?

FLORENCE—With all my heart.

WILLIAM—And?

FLORENCE—I'll always love you.

WILLIAM—And?

FLORENCE—I'll never love anybody else.

WILLIAM—And I'll work real hard.

FLORENCE—Yes.

WILLIAM—And we'll have a little flat?

FLORENCE—Yes.

WILLIAM (*pretends seriousness, then smiles*)—And you'll prepare all my meals?

FLORENCE—Yes.

WILLIAM (*pretends seriousness, then smiles*)—And—and—I'll come home every night?

FLORENCE—Yes.

WILLIAM—And we'll never quarrel.

FLORENCE—No.

WILLIAM—And—and—

FLORENCE—Say it.

WILLIAM—But why should—

FLORENCE—Don't argue. Say it.

WILLIAM (*serious and reluctantly*)—And I'll always let you have your own way.

FLORENCE—Yes.

WILLIAM—Now the wild west.

FLORENCE—If you ceased loving me I'd—I'd—I can't say it, but I would. (*They kiss. A pause, during which they regard each other lovingly.*)

WILLIAM—You're sure you love me for myself alone?

FLORENCE—Surely. Why do you always ask me that?

WILLIAM—Because there's lots of girls who are looking for a desirable match, not a husband. I want to be sure of you. I couldn't be if you loved me for things external to myself, for life's all a gamble and the external things might disappear.

FLORENCE (*regards him in a startled way*)—You talk like a book. Where did you get that idea?

WILLIAM (*offended*)—That's right. Every time I have a clever idea, you accuse me of stealing it.

FLORENCE—I didn't mean it that way, Will.

WILLIAM—You're sure you didn't?

FLORENCE—Sure.

WILLIAM—And you love me for myself alone?

FLORENCE—For yourself alone. (*They kiss.*)

WILLIAM—Well, Flo, I'm sorry, but I must be going. (*Consults watch. Rises excitedly.*) I'm late. (*Moves to exit, center. Florence blocks way.*)

FLORENCE—Tell me before you go.

WILLIAM—I love you. (*Tries to make exit, but Florence takes hold of his arm and holds him.*)

FLORENCE—How much?

WILLIAM (*speaks excitedly*)—With all my heart. For goodness sakes, I'm late, Florence. Mr. Riley will be furious and father infamous. (*Tries again, furiously this time, to make exit, but Florence clings to him.*)

FLORENCE—And?

WILLIAM—I'll always love you. Let me go! If I miss Riley I'll get killed when I get home!

(Same bus. of trying to make exit.)

FLORENCE—And?

WILLIAM (sees it is futile to attempt to leave without satisfying her. Speaks rapidly.) Nobody else. Work hard. Flat. Meals. Home every night. Never quarrel. Your own way, as I'm doing now. Wild west. (He breaks away from Florence and moves to exit, center, and almost runs into Mr. Gilmore, who enters.) How do you do, Mr. Gilmore. Good-bye, Mr. Gilmore. (Exits excitedly. Florence laughs. Gilmore is rather sober looking. He is forty-five years of age.)

GILMORE—What's the matter with Will? (Crosses to table.)

FLORENCE (lightly)—He was to call for Mr. Riley at five-thirty to take him to his home and he's all excited because he's late.

GILMORE (excitedly)—Riley?

FLORENCE (thoughtful)—Yes. Mr. Riley, the manager of the Pinkerton detective agency. Surely you know him, don't you, father?

GILMORE—Yes—did he—yes, I know him.

FLORENCE—Why, father! What's the matter?

GILMORE—Nothing, dear, nothing. Overworked. Bunch of nerves.

FLORENCE (crosses to father)—Dear old father. You do work hard. Too hard. You ought to take a vacation.

GILMORE—Think I will. Made my preliminary plans.

FLORENCE (rather glad)—You did?

GILMORE—Yes.

FLORENCE—Where are you going, father? To Europe?

GILMORE—I haven't decided that.

FLORENCE—But you said you've made your plans.

GILMORE—My preliminary plans. I've resigned as general manager of the Western.

FLORENCE—You have! When did you resign, father?

GILMORE—Today. This afternoon.

FLORENCE—I'm so glad, father. You've been so worried and worn out of late you haven't been yourself at all. But now you'll be the same cheerful, happy dad you always were. (Gilmore reflects remark seriously. Pause.) Oh, the newspapers have been asking for you.

GILMORE (excitedly)—The newspapers? What did they say?

FLORENCE—Just that they wanted to speak to you. I'll bet it's because you resigned your position. (Notices her father's worried and serious expression.) You're all worn out, father. You'd better retire early.

GILMORE—Guess I will. Where's your mother?

FLORENCE—In the sitting room. Shall I call her?

GILMORE—Yes. (Florence crosses to exit, right, while her



*father is deep in thought. When Florence reaches exit her father calls her.)* Oh, Florence.

FLORENCE (*stops, turns, crosses*)—Yes, father.

GILMORE (*pause*)—You're not serious about Will, are you?

FLORENCE—Why, father? Why do you ask?

GILMORE—Tell me. Are you?

FLORENCE—Why—you don't object to him, do you?

GILMORE—No, but I'd rather you wouldn't be serious about him.

FLORENCE (*pause*)—You haven't anything against Will, have you, father?

GILMORE—No. But you're both pretty young. You can't tell what might happen before you two were married.

FLORENCE—You frighten me, father. Won't you explain; won't you tell me what you mean? Surely, something is the matter.

GILMORE—I only mean it for your own good. I want to warn you against a youthful love affair which may only result in unhappiness for both of you.

FLORENCE—But you don't object if I see him, do you, father?

GILMORE (*thoughtfully and reluctantly*)—You may see him. (*Florence crosses, right, and is deep in thought. Mrs. Gilmore enters, right.*)

MRS. GILMORE (*crosses to her husband*)—Hello, dear; (*Kisses him. Notes her husband's attitude.*) Why, Frank, what in the world is the matter? (*Turns and notes daughter's attitude.*) What has happened?

FLORENCE (*crosses, left*)—Father asked me not to be serious about Will, and in explaining why, he only frightened me.

MRS. GILMORE (*to husband*)—What did you say to Florence, dear?

FLORENCE—That we were both young and something might happen to make us both unhappy. It wasn't what father said, so much as the way he said it, that frightened me.

MRS. GILMORE—I'm sure your father spoke because he loves you too much to see you make a mistake.

GILMORE—I didn't mean any harm, Florence.

FLORENCE (*thinks a moment, then rushes to her father*)—I know you didn't, father. You frightened me, that's all. But you are real sure you don't know any reason, now, why Will and I should be kept apart?

GILMORE (*bus. of expression*)—Why, no. Of course not.

FLORENCE—You'll forgive me, father?

GILMORE—No harm done, Florence.

MARIE (*enters, right*)—Hello, daddy. (*She rushes to her father and throws herself in his arms. Gilmore brightens considerably at sight of child.*)

GILMORE—How are you, dear? (*Raises Marie off her feet*

*and kisses her.*) My, but you're getting to be a big girl. You'll be as big as your daddy soon. (*Puts Marie down.*)

MARIE—I want to be just like my daddy.

MRS. GILMORE—I thought you were my girl, Marie.

MARIE (*puzzled a moment*)—I am. I'm your girl and daddy's girl, too. I want to be like my daddy and you, mamma.

MRS. GILMORE—But you can't be like both of us.

MARIE—Yes I can, mamma. Just like teacher told us of women that were half fish. (*Mother and father smile.*)

MRS. GILMORE—Marie, you must go with sister and get ready for dinner.

MARIE—Must I, mama?

MRS. GILMORE—Yes, dear.

MARIE—Oh, I wish I could eat once in my limber clothes. (*Father and mother smile.*)

MRS. GILMORE—Hurry now, dear.

MARIE—All right, mamma. So long, daddy.

GILMORE—So, long, dear. (*Gilmore looks lovingly after Marie as she exits with Florence, right. A slight pause. Telephone bell rings. Gilmore's happy countenance disappears.*)

GILMORE (*to wife*)—If that's a newspaper, say I'm not here.

MRS. GILMORE—Why should I say that?

GILMORE—Please, dear.

MRS. GILMORE—But I don't want to tell a falsehood.

GILMORE (*impatiently*)—It's a mental reservation. I'm not here for the paper.

MRS. GILMORE (*hesitates, then crosses to 'phone and takes up receiver. At 'phone*)—Hello, the Examiner? Mr. Gilmore is not here. (*Hangs up receiver.*) That's the second newspaper call I've answered this evening. What is it all about? Another election?

GILMORE—No. (*Crosses to 'phone, takes receiver off hook and leaves it down.*)

MRS. GILMORE—Thank goodness that isn't it. If you ever go campaigning again as you did at the last, I'll join the suffragist club and do a little missionary work myself. Why are the papers calling you?

GILMORE (*pause*)—I've given up my position with the Western.

MRS. GILMORE—You have! When did you give up your position?

GILMORE—This afternoon.

MRS. GILMORE—And you haven't said a word to me about it?

GILMORE (*hesitates before answering*)—You and I have been good old pals all these years haven't we, dear?

MRS. GILMORE (*frightened*)—Yes.

GILMORE—And we've always been on the square and above board and shared all our secrets.

Mrs. GILMORE (*more frightened*)—Yes.

GILMORE—I want to be on the square now. (*Pause.*) I didn't give up my position.

Mrs. GILMORE (*somewhat relieved*)—What in the world made you say you did?

GILMORE (*pause*)—I lost it.

Mrs. GILMORE (*startled*)—You lost it?

GILMORE—Yes. Simms, Murphy and I were all forced to resign this afternoon.

Mrs. GILMORE—Forced to resign? Why?

GILMORE—Political reasons.

Mrs. GILMORE—Political reasons?

GILMORE—We supported a political enemy of the Western at the last election. Of course, that wasn't the reason given.

Mrs. GILMORE—What was the reason given?

GILMORE (*taken unawares*)—Why, none.

Mrs. GILMORE—But you intimated there was.

GILMORE—There was no reason given. Absolutely none.

Mrs. GILMORE—Are you very, very sure?

GILMORE—Of course. Certainly.

Mrs. GILMORE—But I suppose the papers will make a big story of it and intimate all kinds of reasons, and we'll all be disgraced and shamed.

GILMORE—No, no. That is—well, the papers may find reasons; may make insinuations. But we will not mind them, dear.

Mrs. GILMORE—Oh, Frank! I wish you had remained in that little country town, away from all this bustle and hustle for wealth, and we'd have been much happier. You wouldn't have worried and fretted as you have done lately, and no one could speak of you then, as they will now.

GILMORE—Don't go imagining all sorts of things dear. Everything will be all right. Don't worry about it.

Mrs. GILMORE—Has the fact that you lost your position anything to do with warning Florence against Will?

GILMORE (*startled*)—Why, no. Why, what do you mean?

Mrs. GILMORE—Oh, I don't know. Will's father hasn't been here for over two weeks, and Will explained it was because he has been busy on an investigation, as though that should keep him away. You favor Will, but as soon as you lose your position you warn Florence against him.

GILMORE (*bus. of expression*)—Of course, that hasn't anything to do with it. That's so foolish. How can you imagine such a thing?

Mrs. GILMORE—I wonder are you keeping anything from me?

GILMORE—Why, no, dear. Not a thing. I've told you

everything. There is nothing more to tell. You don't for one moment doubt me, do you?

Mrs. GILMORE—I've never had any reason to doubt you, Frank. I don't doubt you now. I believe in you; I trust you. If I didn't, I couldn't love you, and if I didn't love you, I wouldn't be your wife.

GILMORE—If I deceived you—of course. If you didn't believe in me you couldn't love me. That's natural. Perfectly natural. I feel the same way about it, dear, the same way. (*Door bell rings.*)

Mrs. GILMORE—You act so strangely. You're all tired out, worried about your trouble. But I'll share this disappointment with you, as I have shared disappointments before. I think you'd better go away until this affair blows over. The papers will be bothering you, asking explanations, and you'll worry and fret and only tire yourself more.

GILMORE—You want me to go away and leave you here alone?

Mrs. GILMORE—I think it will be better, dear. It'll be recreation for you and you need a rest so badly. I want you to go and not bother about me. I'll have the children.

GILMORE—I don't know what I'd do without you. You're everything to me, dear—everything. And I want to be on the square.

Mrs. GILMORE—And you will be, always?

GILMORE—Yes, yes, of course.

JANE (*enters, center, and announces*)—Mr. Murphy to see Mr. Gilmore.

GILMORE—Show him in. (*Jane exits, center.*) (*To wife*)—Murphy and Simms are coming to have a short chat before dinner, dear. Now, don't say any more about the Western. I told Florence I resigned. The children need know no different, nor anyone else—But you. I want to be on the square with you. Yes, I want to be on the square with you.

Mrs. GILMORE—You're quite sure you're keeping nothing from me?

GILMORE—Nothing, dear, nothing. (*Crosses with wife to exit, right. Mrs. Gilmore exits and Gilmore recrosses, center. He takes a paper from his pocket, reads it, then places it on table. Murphy is ushered in by Jane. Murphy is a rough, good-natured Irishman, with a very slight brogue. He is dressed neatly, but plainly, and is forty years of age.*)

JANE—Mr. Murphy. (*Murphy looks at Jane with a peculiar expression and watches her quizzically as she exits, center.*)

MURPHY—Faith, you know me without having her tell you who I am. (*Gilmore remains serious.*) And, to be sure, I could have found my way in here alone.

GILMORE (*soberly*)—It's the custom, Murphy, to announce a guest and show him in.



MURPHY—Custom, is it? The only time I was ever shown into a place was one night I was looking for Casey's saloon. A copper found me before I found Casey's. And he didn't announce me, either. They all knew me. (*Notices Gilmore's serious attitude.*) You're not worrying about your job, are you, Mr. Gilmore?

GILMORE—The job doesn't worry me. I'm thinking of my wife.

MURPHY—Your wife?

GILMORE—Yes. I lied to her for the first time in my life. And if she knew—God!

MURPHY—Faith, if I was like you, my wife's name would be Casey or Kelly or Muldoon long ago. How much did you tell your wife?

GILMORE—Only that I was forced to resign.

MURPHY—That's more than I told mine. When she asked me why I quit my job, I told her the black hands was after me because I was becoming one of them financiers. And you know what she said? (*Laughs.*) She said she didn't care the black of her nails why I quit, but I'd have to support myself.

GILMORE—I wish I could look upon the affair as lightly as you do. We're in a pretty bad mess, Murphy. I wanted you and Simms to talk matters over.

MURPHY—A bad mess? Sure, we're too slick for the Western.

GILMORE—That's what we've thought, and that's just why we may be found out.

MURPHY—Faith, how are they going to find out anything?

GILMORE—The state's attorney has been carrying on a secret investigation the past two weeks.

MURPHY—How do you know?

GILMORE—The president of the Newell Repair Company told me so just before I came home and Worthing's son verified it before my wife, although he didn't say what his father was investigating.

MURPHY—Where did the president get his information?

GILMORE—Two weeks ago he employed a man by the name of Ford to check up on a cashier he thought was going wrong. Ford worked on the books at night, of course, so no one in the office would know anything about it. Two nights ago the president happened into the office, and caught Ford taking photographs of the stubs of checks you, Simms and I received for turning the Western's repair business over to the Newell concern.

MURPHY (*has been regarding Gilmore's information lightly*)—Say who is this fellow Ford?

GILMORE—An employee of the state's attorney's office, of course.

MURPHY (*laughs*)—You're a bad detective. (*Laughs.*)

GILMORE—I tell you that's the only explanation.

MURPHY—Is it? Faith, you're on the wrong scent.

GILMORE—How do you know?

MURPHY—Because I met Ford last night.

GILMORE—You met him. Where?

MURPHY—At my home.

GILMORE—At your home?

MURPHY—Yes. If you don't believe me, here's his cards.  
(*Offers Gilmore a bunch of photographs which he takes from his pocket.*)

GILMORE (*looks at photographs excitedly*)—Cards? Black-mail! How much did you pay for these?

MURPHY—I'm ashamed to tell you. But I'd like to go in the photograph business on the same scale.

GILMORE—How did Ford happen to come to you?

MURPHY—He said he had observed in his travels that the middle class do all the coughing, and he'd sooner play a sure bet than a ten to one shot.

GILMORE—How about the plates?

MURPHY—Sure, I have them at my home.

GILMORE—Does Ford know enough to keep his mouth shut?

MURPHY—If he doesn't he can learn.

GILMORE—Simms and I will reimburse you. We'd better destroy these and the plates. They're dangerous things to be lying around. (*Starts to destroy photographs.*)

MURPHY (*crosses to Gilmore*)—Oh, no, you don't. They're the only souvenirs I ever collected. I'm not strong for art or bricks and bracks; but I know real, live souvenirs when I get my hands on 'em.

GILMORE (*reluctantly returns photographs to Murphy, who puts them in his pocket*)—Better destroy them, Murphy.

MURPHY—Faith, now, don't you worry. I'll guard 'em as jealously as these millionaire swells do their pet poodles.

GILMORE—Let us hope that eliminates Ford. Riley of the Pinkertons is at Worthing's home tonight.

MURPHY—Riley? Faith, it'll take more than a Riley to catch a Murphy.

GILMORE—You're looking upon this thing too lightly, Murphy. The Western fired us without giving one single reason, which is proof enough they're suspicious. And why shouldn't they be, when we were fools enough to turn practically all the repair business over to a new concern.

MURPHY—Did you have me come here because you thought I needed cheering up?

GILMORE—I'm not laying down, Murphy. They'll have to land me behind the bars before I give up the fight. But if we expect to come out with a whole skin, you, Simms and I will have to stand together. That's what I want to talk over with both of you.

MURPHY—Stand together? What do you mean?

GILMORE—Worthing may find he hasn't a strong enough case to take into the courts and then try to bluff one of us into turning state's evidence.

MURPHY—He'd have a fine chance with me.

GILMORE—I know you're a man, Murphy, and I tell you frankly I wouldn't take THE IMMUNITY BATH if the penitentiary opened before me. But I'm afraid of Simms.

JANE (*enters and announces*)—Mr. Simms.

MURPHY—Speak of the devil.

GILMORE—Show him in. (*Jane exits, center. Murphy looks after her in a peculiar manner as before.*)

MURPHY—Simms is a funny acting one. What's the idea?

GILMORE—I've drawn up this agreement, which we are all to sign. (*Takes paper he drew from pocket and placed on table from table, and gives it to Murphy, who looks it over.*)

MURPHY—Faith I'll be a sport. Who'll keep this?

GILMORE—Either you or I.

MURPHY—Well, you keep it. I have enough souvenirs to last me a lifetime. (*Indicates coat pocket. Puts paper Gilmore gave him on table.*)

JANE—(*enters, center, with Simms*)—Mr. Simms. (*Murphy regards Jane as before. Jane exits, center.*)

MURPHY—Hello, Simms. (*Simms is an out-and-out coward. He enters shrinking and greatly worried. He is thirty-five years of age.*)

SIMMS—Hello. Are we caught?

MURPHY—We'll all be pinched tonight.

SIMMS—We will?

MURPHY (*laughs*)—Now, don't you get excited. We just want to have a social chat, don't we, Mr. Gilmore?

GILMORE—Yes. Sit down, Simms. (*Simms sits in chair left of table. Gilmore stands left, Murphy right*). To guard again any smart play on the state's attorney's part, Murphy and I thought it advisable that the three of us agree to stand together.

SIMMS—Of course, you weren't thinking of leaving me in a lurch, were you? I always opposed this repair shop scheme, and you know it.

MURPHY—Here, here, Simms. Don't go talking like that. It wasn't the scheme you opposed. You always reminded me of a safecracker I knew, who wanted to get rich on the risk of a shoplifter.

GILMORE—Everything is agreeable, then, Simms?

SIMMS—Just what do you mean?

GILMORE—I mean that we are to stand together.

SIMMS—Certainly.

GILMORE—Of course, to make it more binding, we'll put it in writing.

SIMMS—In writing?

GILMORE—Yes. We'll sign an agreement.

SIMMS—Oh, I wouldn't sign anything unless I consulted my lawyer.

MURPHY—We're going to bring no lawyers into this. Faith, it's bad enough.

GILMORE—Murphy and I are willing.

MURPHY—Sure. Let's take a vote on it.

GILMORE—Here's the agreement, Simms. (*Picks up paper from table and give it to Simms.*) Look it over.

SIMMS (*takes paper and reads aloud*)—"We hereby agree as men of honor to stand together in whatever dealings we may have had, business or otherwise."

GILMORE—You see, it doesn't set forth anything specifically.

SIMMS—Who is to keep this?

MURPHY (*bus of expression*)—We'll take a vote on it.

SIMMS—It really doesn't matter who'll keep it. I don't see that it is necessary.

GILMORE—As long as we'll agree to stand together, we might as well put it in writing. I think we would consider it more binding that way.

SIMMS—I don't just understand the reason for it.

GILMORE—It's to guard against the possibility of one of us turning state's evidence and thereby causing the conviction of the other two. It's a sort of a mutual protection against conviction. None of us would break our word of honor, especially when it is put in writing. Brink, whom we froze out some time ago, may appear against us. If he does, and one of us welches, it will look pretty bad for the other two.

SIMMS—Then Worthing has found us out?

GILMORE—I don't know. I'm sure he's been investigating. We want to be prepared, that's all.

SIMMS—I wouldn't betray you and Murphy and I'm sure neither of you would betray me.

GILMORE—You were willing to agree orally, why not in writing? (*Simms does not answer. Pause.*)

MURPHY—Give me that; give me that. (*Takes paper and signs. Simms watches him intently.*)

Murphy (*offering Simms paper*)—You're next, Simms.

SIMMS—I prefer to think it over.

MURPHY (*to Gilmore*)—Perhaps you'd better sign while he's thinking about it. (*Gilmore signs and Simms watches him as he did Murphy.*)

GILMORE (*to Simms*)—Here you are, Simms. (*Places agreement before him.*)

SIMMS—I'll wait until later.

MURPHY—Maybe you think we're trying to skinflint you. Well, if you think so, look here. (*Takes photographs from pocket and holds them before Simms.*)



SIMMS (*rises excitedly*)—My God! Where did you get them?

MURPHY—From the man that took 'em.

SIMMS—Ford?

MURPHY—Yes.

SIMMS—What are you going to do with them?

MURPHY—Keep 'em as souvenirs.

SIMMS—As souvenirs?

MURPHY—Yes. Faith, did you think I was going to put 'em in my biography? (*Simms sits again in chair, left of table, takes up pen and leans over paper. Murphy, who has moved back of table is putting photographs in his pocket and drops one on the floor. Simms, in leaning over paper, notices the photograph. He signs the paper, looking down and watching the photograph.*)

MURPHY (*takes up agreement after Simms has signed it, crosses to Gilmore, left, and gives him the paper*)—Here you are. Faith, he's as obstinate as my wife. (*While Murphy and Gilmore are looking away, Simms hurriedly reaches down, picks up photograph which lies on floor, and quickly puts it in his pocket.*)

GILMORE (*turns to Simms*)—Everything satisfactory?

SIMMS (*nervously*)—Yes, everything. I'll have to be going. (*Rises.*)

GILMORE—Why not stay for dinner?

SIMMS—I promised my wife I'd be home.

GILMORE (*to Murphy*)—You'll stay, Murphy.

MURPHY—You'll excuse me. If you have a girl to show me into the room and tell you my name, I don't know what I'd be up against at dinner. (*Gilmore smiles faintly. Simms and Murphy cross to exit, center.*)

GILMORE—Oh, Murphy. My wife thought it advisable that I go out of town until this affair blows over. If I do, I'll keep in touch with you, and I'll expect you to wire me if anything startling happens.

MURPHY—I'll do that. Good night.

GILMORE (*crosses to exit, center, with both men*)—Good night, Murphy. I guess you can find your way out.

MURPHY—Faith, if I can't, I'll call the guide. (*Gilmore smiles faintly.*)

SIMMS—Good night, Gilmore. You don't think we'll be caught?

GILMORE—I hope not. Good night. (*Simms and Murphy exit, center. Gilmore stands at exit, center, a moment after Simms and Murphy have gone. He is deep in thought. He moves a few steps to desk, left, wherein he intends to put the agreement he has in hand, when Mrs. Gilmore, unknown to him, enters, right.*)

Mrs. GILMORE (*sees paper*)—Why, what's that dear?

GILMORE (*turns and is excited, because of a conscious guilt, and his wife's question, without a knowledge of her presence.*)  
—Why—this—

Mrs. GILMORE—Yes, the paper. (*Marie, unknown to father and mother, enters, right. She is garbed in her smart clothes.*)

GILMORE—The paper, the paper. Oh, yes. We've decided to buy property—property on the lake front—great site for a hotel. (*Recovers his composure.*) You know I got the better of the bargain. I get sixty per cent of the income, and they only get forty.

MARIE—What a smart papa! (*Mrs. Gilmore looks at child, Marie gazes lovingly and proudly at her father and Gilmore reflects his child's line as he understands it,*

AS THE CURTAIN FALLS.

## ACT II.

LIBRARY IN THE GILMORE HOME. ONE WEEK LATER. 7:15 P. M.

(When the curtain rises Jane enters, center. She has the evening paper in hand. She crosses to table, center, and places the paper on table. The door bell rings. Jane exits. Mrs. Gilmore and Marie enter door, right. Marie carries a school book. Marie crosses to table and picks up paper Jane has left there.)

Mrs. GILMORE—Let mother have the paper, dear.

MARIE (*reluctantly gives paper to mother*)—You haven't let me see the paper for a whole week now mama, not even the funny pictures.

Mrs. GILMORE—You may see the funny pictures, dear.

MARIE—I mean the funny pictures on the first page. (*Jane re-enters center with a telegram in hand. She crosses to Mrs. Gilmore.*)

JANE—A telegram, Mrs. Gilmore. (*Mrs. Gilmore takes telegram.*)

MARIE—I hope papa's coming home. (*Mrs. Gilmore opens telegram and reads.*) Is papa coming home mama?

Mrs. GILMORE—Yes, dear. (*To Jane*) Mr. Gilmore will arrive at seven-thirty, Lake Shore. Tell John to hurry.

JANE—Yes, mam. (*Exits center.*)

MARIE—I'm glad papa is coming. I've missed him awful much. I'll bet he'll let me see the papers.

Mrs. GILMORE—You mustn't ask him, dear.

MARIE—Mustn't I?

Mrs. GILMORE—No, Marie.

MARIE—I won't, mama. (*She crosses to stool set before large library chair, right and seats herself.*) You sit here mama (*indicating library chair*) and read, and I'll study.

Mrs. GILMORE—All right, dear. (*Mrs. Gilmore crosses and seats herself in library chair, right.*)

MARIE—I wished I didn't need to study mama.

Mrs. GILMORE (*unfolds newspaper and glances through it. She continues this business while talking to Marie*). All girls must study, dear.

MARIE—Why, mama?

Mrs. GILMORE—So they'll be smart.

MARIE—Will I be smart, mama?

Mrs. GILMORE—If you study real hard, dear.

MARIE—Does it do any good to be smart?

Mrs. GILMORE—People respect girls that are smart.

MARIE—Will they respect me, mama? (*Mrs. Gilmore has discovered an article in the newspaper which causes her*

to start. *She holds paper at place and reads excitedly.*) Will they, mama?

Mrs. GILMORE (*excitedly*)—Yes. Of course, of course. Now study your lessons Marie and don't bother mother.

MARIE—All right, mama. (*Marie studies. Mrs. Gilmore hurriedly reads article and becomes noticeably worried and excited. Marie does not notice this action. Mrs. Gilmore tears the article from the paper. Marie looks up from her book at her mother and breaks the silence.*)

MARIE—What are you doing that for, mama?

Mrs. GILMORE (*pause*)—Oh—why—a bargain in linens tomorrow. (*Recovers her composure somewhat.*) I'm going to buy you the prettiest things, Marie.

MARIE (*rises from her stool and puts down her books*)—Let me see the bargains, mama. (*Stands beside her mother, puts her arms about her neck and tries to look at the article her mother has clipped; but Mrs. Gilmore holds it away so that she cannot see it.*)

Mrs. GILMORE—Mother wants to surprise Marie.

MARIE—Can't I see the bargains mama?

Mrs. GILMORE—Mother does not want to show Marie, now.

MARIE—All right, mama. (*Phone bell rings. Mrs. Gilmore rises and crosses to table center. She takes up the receiver.*)

Mrs. GILMORE (*at 'phone*)—Hello! Who is this? Why, how do you do, Mr. Worthing. Mr. Gilmore will be home in five or ten minutes. I'm glad you're coming up. I wish you'd hurry. Please hurry. (*Hangs up receiver.*)

MARIE—Was that Will, mama?

Mrs. GILMORE—No, dear. His father.

MARIE—Why do you want him to hurry, mama?

Mrs. GILMORE—Marie shouldn't be so inquisitive.

MARIE—I wasn't inquisitive, mama. (*Pause.*) I'm not going to study any more. My eyes are tired. (*Puts down her book.*)

Mrs. GILMORE—You'd better go to bed, dear.

MARIE—I want to wait till papa comes, mama. Just think, I haven't seen him for almost a whole week.

Mrs. GILMORE—And you'll go right to bed as soon as he comes?

MARIE—Yes, mama. (*She crosses left. Takes up ball and jacks, seats herself on floor and begins to play. Mrs. Gilmore again seats herself in library chair right and is deep in thought. She glances over clipping she holds in her hand.*)

MARIE—There was the awfulest fight at school to-day, mama.

Mrs. GILMORE (*looks up at child*)—A fight? What about, Marie?



MARIE (*proudly*)—About me, mama.

Mrs. GILMORE—About you?

MARIE—Yes. Walter Mason said my papa used to be general manager of the Western Railroad all right, and his papa is only a bricklayer, but his papa always made an honest living.

Mrs. GILMORE (*quickly glances at clipping she holds*)—That was a terrible thing for him to say. It was horrible of him to speak that way about your father.

MARIE—That's just what Johnny Jones thought, so he knocked the stuffin' out of Walter for being so fresh.

Mrs. GILMORE—You mustn't have anything more to do with Walter. He's a horrid, horrid boy, Marie. Promise you will have nothing more to do with him.

MARIE—I promise, mama. (*Marie continues her game of jacks. There is a slight pause, Mrs. Gilmore all the while buried deep in thought and greatly worried. Finally Marie rises, crosses to her mother and stands before her.*) Is papa honest, mama?

Mrs. GILMORE—Why, Marie! I'm surprised! How can you ask such a question, how can you even have such a thought? Why, of course, papa is honest!

MARIE—That's what I told Walter, but Walter said if I thought papa was honest, all I had to do was read the papers, and you won't let me read the papers, mama!

Mrs. GILMORE (*again glances quickly at clipping*)—He's a horrid boy, Marie. He should get a sound thrashing for speaking as he does about your father.

MARIE—I know, mama, and if I was a man I'd knock the stuffin' out of him myself.

Mrs. GILMORE—And you'll have nothing more to do with him, Marie?

MARIE—Honest I won't, mama. Cross my heart. (*She crosses her heart.*)

Mrs. GILMORE—That's a good girl. And you won't say any more about it?

MARIE—Can't I tell sister?

Mrs. GILMORE—No. Not sister.

MARIE—Well, I can tell papa?

Mrs. GILMORE—Mother doesn't want Marie to say any more about it.

MARIE—I promise, but it's hard to keep, 'cause you know the fight was about me. (*William and Florence enter center.*)

FLORENCE—The next time I go walking with Will, he'll know it. He just walked faster and faster, so's he could brag I couldn't keep up. But I did. (*Has crossed to her mother and notices her serious expression.*) Why, mother! What's happened? Anything about father?

Mrs. GILMORE (*rises*)—Your father will be home in a few minutes. John has gone for him.

FLORENCE (*notices clipping her mother still holds*)—What's that? (*Mrs. Gilmore, business of expression.*)

MARIE—Oh, that's a bargain; but, mama, wouldn't let me see it, so she isn't going to let you see it, either. (*Mrs. Gilmore reflects remark of child.*)

FLORENCE (*noticing mother's reflection*)—Mother.

MRS. GILMORE (*to Marie*)—I want to speak to Florence and Will, Marie.

MARIE—Can't I stay, mama?

MRS. GILMORE—Mother wants to speak to Florence and Will.

MARIE—But I can see papa when he comes.

MRS. GILMORE—Yes, dear.

MARIE—All right, mama. And you won't show sister the bargains?

MRS. GILMORE—No, dear.

MARIE—Don't forget to tell me when papa comes.

MRS. GILMORE—I'll tell you, dear. (*Marie exits right.*)

MRS. GILMORE—All week I have had to lie to her as I have lied now, and now——. It's terrible!

FLORENCE—What is it, mother?

MRS. GILMORE (*gives Florence clipping*)—Read! We'll be disgraced, ruined! (*William crosses to Florence and he and she read clipping together. They become worried and excited.*)

FLORENCE—Mother! Father accused of stealing the Western's money. There must be some mistake! It isn't possible, it can't be possible! And Will, your father has conducted the investigation and will bring the charges! There must be some mistake! Oh, it's the newspapers! They've been making nasty insinuations ever since father resigned!

MRS. GILMORE—Yes; but this; this is a direct accusation!

WILLIAM (*innocently*)—Father has been investigating something or other, Florence.

MRS. GILMORE—I remember now. You told me that's why he didn't come to see Mr. Gilmore and I. But it can't be true, that your father, our friend, has been investigating Mr. Gilmore and will accuse him of theft. Oh, I can't believe it.

WILLIAM—If it is true, I'll tell father a thing or two and you watch if I don't.

MRS. GILMORE—Hasn't your father said anything about it to you?

WILLIAM—Not a word.

MRS. GILMORE—And he never objected that you came to see Florence?

WILLIAM—No. Never. He always seemed to approve my coming here.

MRS. GILMORE—Then it must be a mistake. Your father wouldn't allow you, his own son, to call upon the daughter of a man he thought a thief.

FLORENCE—No. I don't think he would mother. I don't think he would.

WILLIAM—Oh, hang what he thinks, or anybody else, for that matter.

FLORENCE—But father did say something about Will. Don't you remember, mother, he——. I wonder.

WILLIAM—What did he say about me?

FLORENCE (*excitedly*)—It doesn't matter! It wasn't anything! Let's not talk about it!

MRS. GILMORE—I hope we'll find it all a horrible mistake. (*Brightening.*) Perhaps that's why your father is coming here, Will, to tell us it is a mistake.

WILLIAM (*relieved*)—I'll bet that's it. When is he coming?

MRS. GILMORE—He ought to be here now. I hope that's why he's coming, to tell us it's a mistake. You'll excuse me, Will? (*Exits right.*)

WILLIAM (*slowly*)—Suppose—suppose it were true, Florence. Suppose your father were accused. Would that make any difference between you and me?

FLORENCE—It's too horrible to suppose. Let's not talk about it.

WILLIAM—Would it make any difference, Florence?

FLORENCE—I think a girl should put a man on a higher plane. At least, she should not drag him down. And that's what I would be doing, Will, if my family's name were disgraced. But we'll not talk about it. I don't believe my father even accused.

WILLIAM—Suppose I got my father to withdraw the charges?

FLORENCE—But I will not believe there are any charges.

WILLIAM—I'm just supposing.

FLORENCE—Your father couldn't possibly withdraw any charges. It's nonsensical to talk that way, Will.

WILLIAM—And it's just as nonsensical to hold what your father may have done against you. I'm marrying you, not your father.

FLORENCE—Father is the grandest, dearest, creature, in all the world and he couldn't possibly have done wrong.

WILLIAM—I'm supposing he did for the sake of argument. I want this thing understood, once and for all.

FLORENCE—What do you want me to do?

WILLIAM—Well, if you're going to be pigheaded, let's go out and get married before we know one way or the other. Then no one can say you're dragging me down.

FLORENCE—But do you think I'd want to marry the son of the man who accused my father?

WILLIAM—That's right. As soon as I fix up this family name business, the only argument you had, you think up something else. I don't believe you ever intended to marry me.

FLORENCE—Will. How you talk.

WILLIAM—Will you marry me?

FLORENCE—I don't know.

WILLIAM—You don't know, after I have given you the two best years of my life! You don't know?

FLORENCE—I don't want you to look at it that way, Will. Be a little bit reasonable.

WILLIAM—Reasonable! You ask me to be reasonable? I am reasonable! Will you marry me?

FLORENCE—Do you really love me enough to want me, even if—if father—.

WILLIAM—Yes. In spite of anything.

FLORENCE—Of course I love you.

WILLIAM—That isn't the question. Will you marry me?

FLORENCE—Well, I want you. I would never marry any one else. But we must not be selfish, Will. We will not think of ourselves when poor father is coming home to worry and trouble, even if it is all a mistake.

JANE (*enters center*)—Mr. Worthing.

FLORENCE—Show him in. (*Jane exits center.*)

WILLIAM—Now we'll find out all about it.

FLORENCE—Yes. I'm glad this suspense will soon be over.

WILLIAM—Don't you worry, Flo. Everything will be all right.

FLORENCE—I hope so, Will. It will be rather hard to overcome—if everything isn't all right.

WILLIAM—There you go again. We've got this thing settled, understand, and there's no crawfishing, either.

JANE (*enters center with Worthing*)—Mr. Worthing. (*Worthing is forty-three years of age and rather serious when he enters.*)

FLORENCE (*to Jane*)—Jane, call mother.

JANE—Yes, miss. (*Crosses right and exits.*)

FLORENCE (*takes Worthing's hand*)—How do you do, Mr. Worthing. We haven't seen you for the longest time—Won't you sit down?

WORTHING—Thank you, Florence. (*Crosses to table and seats himself right.*)

WILLIAM—What's all this talk about, father?

WORTHING—I came to see Mr. Gilmore, Will. (*William reflects remark with offended expression.*)

FLORENCE—But it isn't true, Mr. Worthing.

WORTHING—Is your father home, Florence?

FLORENCE—No. But he ought to be here by this time. Tell me, is the story the paper printed true?

WORTHING—I prefer not to speak of it, Florence. I wish you wouldn't ask. (*Mrs. Gilmore enters right. Worthing rises.*) Good evening, Mrs. Gilmore.

Mrs. GILMORE—Good evening, Mr. Worthing. I'm so worried about that story. Tell me it isn't true.



WORTHING (*Bus. of expression. To William*)—Will, a friend of mine is coming over to-night and our maid is out.

WILLIAM—I don't see why you want to get rid of me. I want to know about that story myself.

WORTHING (*to Florence*)—You'll excuse Will, Florence? I should have asked you first.

FLORENCE—If you want me to excuse him, Mr. Worthing.

WILLIAM—Oh, no you don't! I want to know something about this thing! If you intend to accuse Mr. Gilmore, I'm going to be consulted, understand! (*Worthing and Mrs. Gilmore are deep in thought. They are seated on either side of table, looking front.*)

FLORENCE—Your father wants you to go, Will. His friend will call.

WILLIAM—Well, all right; but I'm wise just the same. (*Walks to exit center. Turns and addresses father.*) And we've decided what we're going to do, whether there's anything wrong or not. Haven't we, Florence?

FLORENCE—We'll see.

WILLIAM—Now I suppose you'll want to think it over. You're cheating, that's what you are! You didn't say anything about thinking it over.

FLORENCE—We will not argue about it, Will.

WILLIAM—You bet we won't. I'm going to have my own way this time. After that you can have your way all you want, when we have that flat and you cook my meals and tell me some wild west.

FLORENCE—Good-bye, Will.

WILLIAM—Good-bye, Flo. Good-bye everybody. (*Again stops at exit and turns.*) If your friend expects to find me good company, he'll be fooled, father. (*Exits center. A painful pause.*)

Mrs. GILMORE—Florence, would you mind leaving Mr. Worthing and I alone?

FLORENCE (*hesitates, thinks, then crosses to her mother and acts as though she would argue to remain. Mrs. Gilmore protests in action. Florence hesitates and thinks a moment*)—All right, mother. (*Exits right.*)

Mrs. GILMORE (*looks across table at Worthing*)—Well?

WORTHING—I thought Mr. Gilmore had arrived or I wouldn't have come. I wanted to speak to him.

Mrs. GILMORE—But tell me, please. Mr. Gilmore never keeps anything from me. We've shared each others secrets all our lives. You know that. Tell me it's all a mistake.

WORTHING (*hesitates, then rises*)—I'd better go and return when Mr. Gilmore— (*Crosses to exit center.*)

Mrs. GILMORE (*rises and crosses to him*)—Please don't go. You and I have been good old friends. Tell me the paper made a mistake.

WORTHING—I wish you wouldn't ask, Mrs. Gilmore.

Mrs. GILMORE—Then it's true! I see it in your face! It's true! (*Worthing does not answer.*) You, our friend, accuse Mr. Gilmore! You? I can't believe it! Why did you come here to-night, if it is true? (*Gilmore enters centers. He stands there unnoticed by wife or Worthing.*)

WORTHING—I came because of you—because you and I were— A business matter between Mr. Gilmore and me. A business matter, that's all.

GILMORE (*moves down stage*)—What is this business matter, Worthing?

Mrs. GILMORE (*turns and crosses to her husband rather startled. Worthing does not turn but crosses left, head lowered*)—Dear, have you read the lies, the horrible lies the papers are printing?

GILMORE—Yes, I have read them. (*Glares at Worthing. To him.*) What brought you here, Worthing?

WORTHING—I came to talk things over, Frank. I wanted to talk things over.

GILMORE—How did you know you'd find me here this evening?

WORTHING—I 'phoned and your wife told me so.

GILMORE—That's it?

Mrs. GILMORE—But it isn't true, Frank! It isn't true! You, you accused of—of theft! There must be some mistake! They can't bring such a charge against you! It's all a horrible mistake, isn't it, Mr. Worthing? (*Worthing does not answer.*) (*To Worthing.*) Tell me it's a mistake!

WORTHING—There has been an investigation.

Mrs. GILMORE (*to husband*)—But you're innocent, Frank! you're innocent!

GILMORE—Of course I am innocent.

Mrs. GILMORE (*to Worthing*)—You see, he's innocent, Mr. Worthing! Since you are our friend I know you're glad he's innocent! You'll not bring the charges now, will you Mr. Worthing? (*Worthing does not answer. A slight pause.*) (*To Worthing.*) You investigated because it was your duty as state's attorney to do so, but now that you know Frank is innocent, you'll withdraw the charges? (*Again Worthing does not answer.*) Why don't you speak, why don't you say something? Oh, you don't think my husband guilty! You can't believe him guilty!

WORTHING—You make it hard for me, Mrs. Gilmore, you make it very hard.

Mrs. GILMORE—Tell me you believe in Frank! Tell me you believe him innocent!

WORTHING (*looks down and away*)—I wish to God I could!

GILMORE (*has been watching Worthing all the while, waiting eagerly what he would say*)—You came to tell my wife that? You came to tell her I am guilty?

Mrs. GILMORE (*to Worthing*)—I can't believe you mean

what you are saying! I don't believe it! You're merely jesting—playing some trick—you want to test my love——

GILMORE—He wants to steal your love, that's why he came. He wants to make me out the thief he claims I am.

Mrs. GILMORE (*rushes to her husband and puts her arms about his neck and clings to him*)—No, no! They can't take me from you! No one can take me from you! But tell me you're innocent, dear! It isn't true! You're innocent in spite of what Mr. Worthing says! Look at me, tell me you are innocent!

GILMORE (*looks at wife. A slight pause*)—Do you mistrust me?

Mrs. GILMORE—No, no! I love you too much for that! I believe in you; but I want to hear you say once more you are innocent! (*She looks into his eyes, he in hers.*)

GILMORE—Yes, I am innocent.

Mrs. GILMORE (*leaves husband and crosses to Worthing left.*) (*To Worthing.*)—How can you make such accusations Mr. Worthing—how can you make them against an innocent man?

GILMORE—The Western's behind it all. They're trying to ruin Simms and Murphy and me because we refused to support their putty candidates at the last election, because we refused to give up our citizenship, because we refused to sell ourselves to them body and soul.

Mrs. GILMORE (*to Worthing*)—You see! it's all trickery! Now that you know the Western is behind it for political reasons, it is your duty to withdraw the charges.

WORTHING (*crosses to exit center. Speaks to Gilmore*)—I'll meet you at my office to-morrow.

GILMORE—Why did you come here?

WORTHING—I came out of friendship for you and your wife.

GILMORE—Leave my wife out of it. Why did you come?

WORTHING—I want to help you avoid—avoid the disgrace which will follow the trial.

Mrs. GILMORE—The disgrace! I don't understand! Dear, what does Worthing mean?

GILMORE—What do you mean, Worthing?

WORTHING—I would prefer——

GILMORE—What do you mean?

WORTHING—It would be cruel to speak before—perhaps Mrs. Gilmore—you can tell her all about it later.

GILMORE—Never mind that. Why did you come, Worthing?

WORTHING (*pause*)—I came to offer you one chance in a million to escape punishment.

Mrs. GILMORE—To escape punishment!

GILMORE—And that?

WORTHING—Turn state's evidence.

Mrs. GILMORE—Turn state's evidence!

GILMORE—Take THE IMMUNITY BATH?

WORTHING—Yes. (*Mrs. Gilmore watches husband and Worthing intently but does not speak. She is thoroughly alarmed.*)

GILMORE (*calmly*)—You've missed the one chance in a million, Worthing.

WORTHING—How's that?

GILMORE—You've come to the wrong man. I'm innocent until proven guilty.

Mrs. GILMORE—But they can't prove you guilty, dear! They can't prove you guilty!

GILMORE (*to wife*)—If the Western had a chance to convict me, do you suppose they'd send Worthing to offer me IMMUNITY?

Mrs. GILMORE—Don't ask me to understand anything. My head's all in a whirl. (*Sits herself in chair right of table.*)

GILMORE (*very sarcastically*)—So that's the game, eh? You want me to turn welcher and betray my friends and make a cad of myself before my wife.

WORTHING—No. I want you to do the one and only thing that will prevent you causing your wife and family complete disgrace; the only thing that will prevent unhappiness between your daughter and my son.

GILMORE—Your son! Oh! So you think my daughter isn't worthy of him!

WORTHING—Not that. She is worthy.

GILMORE—What then?

WORTHING—You will make her undesirable for Will unless you do as I ask.

GILMORE (*to wife*)—You see. You see the kind of game he's playing, the influences he's trying to exert to compel me to lie myself into disgrace. (*To Worthing.*) You, you come into my home and say that to me? Since when are you the dictator, since when do you regulate the affairs of my household? I never favored your son. I never knew of any relationship between him and my daughter. I wouldn't have permitted it. I will not permit it now.

WORTHING—You did favor Will.

GILMORE—I liked him, that's all. As a harmless boy I liked him, but I didn't favor him. I don't favor him. So you're playing your hand wrong. You're wasting your cards. But I wouldn't betray my friends in spite of anything you might say; in spite of anything you might do.

WORTHING—You call Murphy and Simms your friends. Why, either one of them would eagerly accept the same chance I have given you.

GILMORE—Then why did you come to me? Did you think me the easiest prey to your dastardly offer?



WORTHING—I came to avoid your wife and family the disgrace conviction will bring.

Mrs. GILMORE—They can't convict you, Frank! They can't convict you!

GILMORE—Of course they can't. They won't convict me. *(Mrs. Gilmore again looks on in silence watching both men eagerly, excitedly.) (To Worthing.)* You'll have a chance to prove your case at the trial if it ever gets that far.

WORTHING—There isn't a missing link in the chain of evidence against you and the rest.

GILMORE—You haven't a case to stand upon. It will be thrown out of the courts and the state's attorney's office will be the laughing stock of the country.

WORTHING—Brink, the foreman you and the Newell Company froze out six months ago will be a witness for the state.

GILMORE—With the money you have behind you, you ought to secure a better witness.

WORTHING—March 14th you and the president of the Newell Company held a private meeting in the First National Bank Building, and two days later you invested thirty thousand dollars in property in this city.

GILMORE—I have the right to invest my money when and how I see fit.

WORTHING—During the past year you have invested altogether two hundred and ten thousand dollars in real estate in this city.

GILMORE—Suppose I have? That's my business.

WORTHING—But it may be the court's business. You may be called upon to account where you secured so much money in one year on an eight thousand dollar salary.

Mrs. GILMORE—Frank, have you invested so much money?

GILMORE—Why, no. Of course not.

WORTHING—You've not only invested as much as I say but three hundred thousand dollars besides, all of which the Newell Repair Company paid you.

GILMORE *(laughs)*—You haven't proved that, Worthing. You couldn't prove it if it were true. *(Laughs.)*

WORTHING—I'll prove it by the cashier the Newell concern thought was going wrong. The cashier who, unknown to the Newell people, secured his position there through the state's attorney's office and for the purpose of appearing in this case if the Western's suspicions were true.

GILMORE *(reflects information very seriously)*—The cashier who was going wrong! The cashier—*(Laughs but it is very evident the laugh is forced, and a very sad effort.)*

WORTHING—The man Ford checked up on.

GILMORE—Ford!

WORTHING—Yes, Ford. He offered me some photographs but I didn't need them, since the cashier has secured a sufficient number, besides other evidence.

MRS. GILMORE (*rises excitedly.*) (*To husband*)—Frank, is this true? Is what Mr. Worthing says true?

GILMORE—Not a word of it! Absolutely not a word of it! You see they have spared no pains to fabricate! They have spared no pains to concoct a good story! But they're lies, all lies! Not a word he says is true! (*To Worthing.*) I don't care to know anything about Ford or your cashier! I don't care to hear any more of your lies! What right have you to offer IMMUNITY?

WORTHING—The right comes with the office which comes from the people.

GILMORE—The people through their representatives set forth certain acts as crimes and certain punishments for those crimes. You take it upon yourself to do away with the punishment. You're defeating the will of the people, that's what you are doing.

WORTHING—I didn't come to argue my right, Gilmore. I came to protect your wife's good name.

GILMORE—You, you protect her good name? You're a disgrace to the office you hold. You think you're doing a hell of a smart thing, when you induce a lot of poor devils to take THE IMMUNITY BATH. You make them believe they're protecting their family's good name, when in reality they're only dragging it further in the mire, by making wenchers and cringing cowards of themselves. But I don't blame them, I blame you. I'm made of different stuff, Worthing. If I'm guilty as hell and standing within the shadow of the penitentiary, I will not accept your damnable offer.

WORTHING—Think of your wife, think of your daughters, think what a term in the penitentiary would mean to them, to their future. (*Mrs. Gilmore sighs aloud but does not speak.*)

GILMORE—Would THE IMMUNITY BATH purge and cleanse me of the crime of which I am accused?

WORTHING—No; but you and Mrs. Gilmore and the children could go to some far distant town where you are unknown. You could forget the past and live for the future.

GILMORE—And how about the wives and children of the friends you would have me betray; the friends who might land behind the bars because of me?

WORTHING—They would consider their wives and families first.

GILMORE—And considering their wives and families, they wouldn't accept your offer any more than I.

WORTHING—I wouldn't be so sure about that. One of your supposed friends has offered me a photograph of the stub of a check paid you by the Newell concern. In fact, he is at this moment waiting at his home, to know whether I want that photograph and further evidence in return for IMMUNITY.

GILMORE—A photograph! (*Laughs.*) A photograph! (*Sarcastically.*) I defy you to name the man.

WORTHING—It isn't necessary.

GILMORE—You have made an accusation against one of my friends! I demand you name the man!

WORTHING (*pause*)—Simms.

GILMORE—Simms is waiting at his home to hear from you?

WORTHING—Yes. Waiting to receive the chance I have offered you. (*Mrs. Gilmore watches her husband intently but does not speak. The latest development has caused her greater anxiety and worry than before. Gilmore thinks a moment, then hastens to the telephone and takes up the receiver.*)

GILMORE (at 'phone)—Hello! Main 221. Hello! Is Mr. Simms there? Hello! Simms? This is Worthing, the state's attorney. I accept your offer. I'll give you IMMUNITY. Have you the photograph? You have? You'll—bring—it—right—up! (*Gilmore puts up receiver limply. He is greatly affected, although he has been afraid of Simms throughout. His head is lowered and he sits there gazing front. Mrs. Gilmore borders on collapse. Worthing looks on greatly affected. Gilmore finally after a long pause looks up and gazes at Worthing as though he has just learned of his presence in the room. Gilmore speaks in a low, broken voice.*) You'd better hurry back to the office Worthing. Simms is on his way there and you might miss him.

WORTHING (*moves slowly up stage, looking down. He stops and speaks feelingly*)—Now will you accept my offer?

GILMORE (*rises, and finds his old character and speaks firmly*)—No. Bring on your IMMUNITY seekers. Line them up from one end of the courtroom to the other. The more you have, the harder I'll fight.

WORTHING—Consider your children's future, consider your wife, consider what this will mean to Florence and Will, if you insist—

GILMORE—I've settled all that. I told you how I felt. There's nothing more to say.

WORTHING—Then you refuse my offer?

GILMORE—Refuse? Of course I refuse. If I played the game and lost I'll take my medicine. To hell with your IMMUNITY BATH! (*Mrs. Gilmore all but collapses in chair right of table; Gilmore stands elevated to his full height center, and Worthington moves to exit center,*

AS THE CURTAIN FALLS.





## ACT III

## LIBRARY IN THE GILMORE HOME.

*(When the curtain rises, Mr. and Mrs. Gilmore and Worthing are discovered in the identical positions they were last seen at the close of act two, for no time elapses between these two acts. Mrs. Gilmore is seated in chair right in a state of collapse, while her husband stands elevated to his full height center. Worthing stands at door center, looks back at husband and wife solemnly, then slowly makes his exit. There is a slight pause when Gilmore slowly turns and looks at his wife. His erect bearing disappears. He slowly crosses to Mrs. Gilmore and pats her lovingly upon the cheek.)*

GILMORE—Come, dear. I know it's hard, but we must be brave.

MRS. GILMORE—Brave, brave. You ask me to be brave? Oh, what shall we do, what shall we do?

GILMORE—We'll fight, dear, we'll fight.

MRS. GILMORE—But against such odds. You are convicted before the trial. You are doomed. What shall we do?

GILMORE—Everything will come out all right. Wait, dear, and you will see. They can't convict me, they can't convict me!

MRS. GILMORE—Everything is against you. Everything.

GILMORE—I know. It's a hard fight. Harder than any I have had. But I'll win in spite of everything.

MRS. GILMORE—I wish I could believe it. I wish I could believe it.

GILMORE—You'll see when the trial is over. You'll see then. Everything will be all right.

MRS. GILMORE—No, no. Just think of the facts against you. The facts. The facts. Where did Worthing get the facts?

GILMORE—He has no facts. They're all lies, all lies. The Western wants to ruin me, and Worthing is helping them.

MRS. GILMORE—No. No. I can't believe that. Worthing has been our friend.

GILMORE—That's just why he thought no one would suspect him; that's why he thinks you will not believe he would lie to bring about my ruin.

MRS. GILMORE—Oh, I can't believe it! Why should he lie? Why should he want to ruin you?

GILMORE—To make himself strong with the people, who elected him. To make them think he's doing his duty. I suppose he's aiming for something bigger, a higher position.

MRS. GILMORE—But he wouldn't need to ruin you to accomplish what you say. He wouldn't do that I am sure.

Why, it's so absurd, so nonsensical. I can't believe he would maliciously ruin you or any one else.

GILMORE—So. You believe him, not me. I see. When I came here this evening he was telling you—— He's won you over.

Mrs. GILMORE (*rises. Her attitude changes completely*)—Frank! How dare you?

GILMORE—I didn't mean it, dear. I didn't mean what you think I did. You love me too much, you believe in me. You're going to stand by me, in spite of everything.

Mrs. GILMORE—I have believed in you throughout. I have defended you. I have asked few questions, few explanations.

GILMORE—I know, dear. You've been more than kind. Too kind with everything against me. You must love me to believe in me, to trust me as you do.

Mrs. GILMORE—Why did you lose your position?

GILMORE—I didn't mean what I said. It's the worry, the trouble, the excitement, the thought of you and Florence and Marie that made me say what I did. But I didn't mean it, so help me God I didn't mean it.

Mrs. GILMORE—Why did you lose your position?

GILMORE—I've told you that, explained it all.

Mrs. GILMORE—Why did you lose your position?

GILMORE—I'm sure I told you. I'm sure of it. The Western sought revenge because I supported an enemy of the road. Don't you recall I told you that?

Mrs. GILMORE—If the Western sought revenge, why were the papers told you resigned?

GILMORE—I don't know why they were told that. I don't—Yes. I can tell you. It just came to me. The Western knew if they said I resigned without giving any reason, it would look peculiar, cause insinuations. I see the trick now. It's clear to me, all clear. You see it yourself, don't you, dear? Don't you see it?

Mrs. GILMORE—Why did you warn Florence against Worthing's son?

GILMORE—You don't mistrust me? You don't think me guilty? I can't believe you do. It isn't fair. It isn't right. I didn't mean what I said about Worthing. I want you to believe in me. I want to feel you do believe in me. I can't, if you question me this way. Perhaps Worthing has been taken in by the Western. Perhaps they've fooled him; made him believe I am guilty when he will find out later I am not.

Mrs. GILMORE—Why did you warn Florence against Will?

GILMORE—I've explained that before. You're all excited, that's why you don't remember. It was because they were both young. You recall now, dear. Surely you remember now that I explained it.

Mrs. GILMORE—Will has been calling here two years. Why

did you think he and Florence too young immediately after you were forced to resign?

GILMORE—It just happened that way. Coincidence, that's all. It never occurred to me before. Will was here that day, that's how it came to my mind.

Mrs. GILMORE—Wasn't it because you knew his father was investigating, and you knew this exposure would come? Wasn't that the reason?

GILMORE—No, no. That wasn't the reason. I've told you the only reason I had. I'm sure there wasn't any other. I didn't suspect I would be accused. I was as much surprised as you when this exposure came. I lost my position through trickery, I tell you. Trickery, that's all. They want to get rid of me. They're trying to ruin me.

Mrs. GILMORE—You remember I asked about a certain paper after you had your talk with Simms and Murphy. You said it was an agreement to buy property for a hotel. Where is that agreement?

GILMORE—In my vault, of course. In my vault. I'll show it to you tomorrow. You'll see that I told the truth.

Mrs. GILMORE—Have you bought the property?

GILMORE—No, not yet. But we will buy it. We're trying to get it cheap. But we'll buy it.

Mrs. GILMORE—Why has Simms turned state's evidence?

GILMORE—Simms? Why—he's a coward, that's all. He's afraid of the trial. He hasn't the nerve to fight. He fears the frameup is too complete, too strong to overcome.

Mrs. GILMORE—And he lies and ruins his reputation?

GILMORE—Simms hasn't any reputation. He hasn't any. He's paid, that's what he is. He's paid to lie and ruin me.

Mrs. GILMORE—You said he lied because he was afraid.

GILMORE—That's right, but they're paying him besides. They're paying him, I tell you. Oh, can't I make you believe anything? Can't I make you believe what I am saying?

Mrs. GILMORE—Simms was your friend. You defended him before Worthing. Why would you claim him as your friend, and why would you defend him if he has no reputation?

GILMORE—Yes, I defended him. I claimed him as a friend. That's true, I did. I didn't think. I didn't want to give in to Worthing. I don't know why I did. You see. You're confusing me, getting me all excited. For God's sake, don't question me any more. Believe in me. I need you. I need your love, your faith. Don't don't mistrust me.

Mrs. GILMORE—And you are going to buy property with Simms, a man who has no reputation; a man you claim lies to ruin you?

GILMORE—That's right. I forgot. The agreement will be canceled now. I forgot about that when you asked me.

Mrs. GILMORE—How much money have you invested in real estate in the past year?

GILMORE—Not a great deal. I haven't counted it up. I've made some money lately. Struck it lucky in stocks. I may have invested more than I think.

Mrs. GILMORE—As much as Worthing claims?

GILMORE—Perhaps, perhaps. Yes, I think as much as Worthing claims. But I made it in stocks, I tell you.

Mrs. GILMORE—What stocks?

GILMORE—I don't know. I mean, I don't remember just now. There were several, several stocks. But you have me so confused I don't recall. I'll look it up in the morning. I'll tell you all about it then.

Mrs. GILMORE—You made over two hundred thousand dollars in stocks and didn't tell me anything about it?

GILMORE—I know that was a mistake. I see your argument. It does look peculiar. I should have told you. But I thought you'd forbid me to speculate. I'd have to explain all the details and you wouldn't understand. You might object because you didn't understand and I wouldn't make the money I knew I could make.

Mrs. GILMORE—Why didn't you tell me about the money after you made it?

GILMORE—I thought I'd invest again and make some more. But I intended to tell you. I intended to tell you when I had enough and wouldn't speculate again.

Mrs. GILMORE—But you invested the money you made in real estate, not stocks.

GILMORE—I know I did. I know that. Please don't question me any further. My brain is on fire. Please don't question me any more tonight.

Mrs. GILMORE—Didn't you receive at least one check from the Newell Company?

GILMORE—No. I never received a cent from the Newell concern. Not one single penny.

Mrs. GILMORE—How about the photograph of the stub of a check Worthing claims Simms has?

GILMORE—Simms hasn't any photograph. He hasn't any, I tell you, because there wasn't any check.

Mrs. GILMORE—Didn't Simms tell you over the telephone that he had such a photograph and that he would bring it over to Worthing's office?

GILMORE—Yes, yes, he did. That's part of the frameup. They can't produce the check. If they do, it's a forgery. I never received a check from the Newell people. Never. But I won't let you question me any further. I won't let you. You haven't any right to question me as you are doing. I've told you I am innocent and you ought to believe me. You ought to, I tell you, instead of doubting me as you are doing.

Mrs. GILMORE—I've been wishing and hoping you would



explain all my doubts away because I want to believe in you. But you haven't answered one single question satisfactorily.

GILMORE—That's because you have me all excited, all worked up. But I can explain everything in the morning. I will explain everything then, everything.

MRS. GILMORE—Maybe I have excited you so that you can't think. I'm willing to cling to any thought, any explanation that will leave you innocent. I want to be blind to all I have seen. I want to be deaf to everything I have heard, because I want to believe in you and love you; for your sake, for my sake, for our children's sake. Think what it means to all of us, think what it would mean to our children's future, if you, their father, were convicted—convicted of theft, sentenced to the ——. Oh, it's horrible, horrible!

GILMORE—Yes, yes. That's why I am fighting. For your sake, for the children's sake. That's why I'll fight conviction until the very end.

MRS. GILMORE—But they can't convict you if you are innocent. They can't! They can't! It's impossible!

GILMORE—Money can do anything nowadays, anything. That's how they framed a good story. People lie, steal, sell their souls for money. But they can't convict me in spite of their money and power and influence. They won't con—. If they do, you'll stand by me, you won't forsake me. You'll still believe in me. You'll wait until ——. Oh, God, they can't convict me! (*Gilmore holds his hands over his eyes. Marie enters door right.*)

MARIE—Oh mama. You promised you'd call me when papa came.

(*Mrs. Gilmore does not answer. She stands right looking front, her back to Marie. Gilmore, who was near wife crosses left, looking away.*)

MARIE—Hello papa. (*Crosses to her father. Notices her father's attitude.*) Why, papa. What's the matter? Have you and mama been fightin'? (*Neither husband or wife answer. Both still look away.*) You're not a bit glad to see me, papa. And I've missed you awful much.

GILMORE (*forced to speak*)—Why, yes, I'm glad to see you, dear.

MARIE—Then kiss me. (*Gilmore turns and leans over to kiss child.*)

MARIE—Oh papa. Kiss me like you always do. (*Gilmore raises Marie off her feet and kisses her. He puts her down. Marie regards him a moment.*) If there's anything the matter papa, I'll help you.

GILMORE—Nothing the matter, dear.

MARIE—Kiss me again papa. You know I haven't seen you for almost a whole week. (*Gilmore again raises child off her feet and kisses her, then puts her down.*) You won't go away any more, will you papa?



GILMORE—Why no. Of course not—unless some business—

MARIE—Oh no papa. I don't want you to go away at all; 'cause it's awful lonesome when you're not here.

GILMORE—I'll not go away Marie.

MARIE—My, but you're cross, papa. (*To mother, who has been reflecting all the while since child's entrance.*) Why is papa so cross mama?

MRS. GILMORE—It's late dear. You ought to be in bed.

MARIE—Can't I stay with papa a little while, mama?

GILMORE—You'd better go to bed Marie. I'll see you in the morning.

MARIE—And you won't break your promise like mama did, when she didn't call me when you came?

GILMORE—No dear.

MARIE—All right. Good night papa.

GILMORE—Good night dear. (*Raises child and kisses her as before.*)

MARIE—(*Crosses to her mother.*) Good night mama.

MRS. GILMORE—Good night Marie. (*Leans over and kisses child.*)

MARIE—(*Crosses to exit right, smiling innocently at her father and waving her hand at him until she nears exit.*) You're real sure you won't go away any more, papa?

GILMORE—Yes dear.

MARIE—Don't you forget. (*Exits right smiling at her father. Gilmore tries hard to smile back at child but it is a sad effort. He watches Marie intently until she is gone, when he puts his hand over his eyes as though to shut out the vision of his child.*)

GILMORE—God! (*He fights hard to control himself, to pull himself together. He crosses shrinking, to his wife right.*) I'm afraid!

MRS. GILMORE—Afraid?

GILMORE—(*Still fighting hard to pull himself together.*) Yes! Afraid of the future, afraid of the trial! I fear—!

MRS. GILMORE—You fear—.

GILMORE—(*Completely breaks down. Speaks slowly and in a voice full of anguish.*) They've got the goods on me. They're going to send me over.

MRS. GILMORE—No, no! You don't know what you are saying! Oh, you, you a thief!

GILMORE—Yes. It's true. I am the thief they claim I am.

MRS. GILMORE—You, you my husband a thief? I can't believe it! I can't believe it!

GILMORE—Please, please forgive me. (*Moves to wife as though to take her in his arms.*)

MRS. GILMORE—(*Moves away quickly crossing left.*) Don't come near me! Don't touch me! You're unclean, unclean!

GILMORE—Yes, yes. I know that. I'm ashamed, ashamed.

But think what I have suffered, think what I have endured, fearing and dreading each day that I would be found out, and you, you would know the truth.

Mrs. GILMORE—And you lied and lied and lied! Told lie after lie to cover up the last! You spoke disgracefully of Worthing who came here as your friend, accused him of lying to ruin you, to attain personal ends! You allowed me to defend you! You deceived me! You have broken my faith in you! Oh, it's terrible, terrible!

GILMORE—I lied because I love you. I didn't want you to know the truth and suffer what I have suffered.

Mrs. GILMORE—You, you speak of love to me! You, who have ruined my life, my reputation! You who will ruin your children's good name and their future!

GILMORE—I am the thief. I'll stand the consequences.

Mrs. GILMORE—You, you stand the consequences! Florence and Marie and I will stand the consequences. It is always the wife and children who stand the consequences. Oh, I wish I had never met you, never known you!

GILMORE—Don't say that. Please don't say that. I need you more than I have ever needed you before. I need you to fight with me, to help me save my good name and yours. I am disgraced, shamed, my future is ruined unless you fight with me. There is nothing left to live for, no reason, no incentive to fight, unless you, you stand by me.

Mrs. GILMORE—Why didn't you think of me before, before you stole? Why didn't you think of your children? Oh, why did you steal?

GILMORE—I was a fool, a fool! I stole because the greed for gold had hold of my very soul. Money, money, flooded my brain. I was crazy for it, craved for it. But I see my mistake now. I see it too clearly. But I won't lose you. You'll stand by me. You'll stand by me and help me fight.

Mrs. GILMORE—I told you that if I didn't trust you I couldn't love you, and if I didn't love you I wouldn't be your wife.

GILMORE—Yes! Yes! You told me that! But now that you are confronted with the reality, you didn't mean it. Oh, I can't believe you mean it! I can't believe you would leave me!

Mrs. GILMORE—Do you think I would live with a man who has deceived me, disgraced me, disgraced my children, a man I could not love or trust?

GILMORE—But you can trust me now. I'll win back your love if you'll give me the chance. I'll win it back and make you forget what I have done. The disgrace I have brought upon you. We'll begin all over again, forget everything.

Mrs. GILMORE—Forget? People will frown upon me, laugh at me, point me out as the wife of a thief. Do you think I will forget?

GILMORE—I know it will be hard to forget, but you will forgive. For the children's sake you will forgive me. The marriage vow is sacred. Think what it would mean to Florence and Marie if you, their mother, left me. Think what it would mean to them, think what they would say.

Mrs. GILMORE-- It's you who has cast a blemish upon their good name. It's you who has disgraced them. Nothing I might do would disgrace them further.

GILMORE—Yes, yes, I realize that. But I must have them and you. You are still my wife. You did love me. You did trust me. For the children's sake you will trust and love me again. For their sake you will stand by and help me fight it out.

Mrs. GILMORE—You haven't a chance in the world to fight it out and win. You are going to the penitentiary, that's where you are going. To the pen—No! No! I won't let you, I won't let you go!

GILMORE—Oh, I'm glad you're with me! I'm glad you'll help me fight! I'm glad you'll stand by me!

Mrs. GILMORE—You must accept Worthing's offer.

GILMORE—Oh! Oh! I can't believe you mean that! You, my wife, ask me to turn welcher? Oh, no, no!

Mrs. GILMORE—You must, you must! It will keep you with us instead of there, there where you will be further disgraced, where you'll further disgrace us!

GILMORE—No, no! It will be worse if I do as you say! It will be worse! We will be disgraced more! Think what a coward, what a cur I will be making of myself! For God's sake don't ask me to accept Worthing's offer!

Mrs. GILMORE—Florence's happiness is dependent upon it.

GILMORE—I don't want her to marry Worthing's son. I never wanted her to marry him. I won't let her marry him. You, you ask me to turn welcher so she can marry Worthing's son?

Mrs. GILMORE—You owe it to all of us to avoid becoming a—convict!

GILMORE—I will avoid that! I'll fight, that's how I'll avoid it. I'll beat them with all their IMMUNITY seekers against me! I'll beat them, that's what I'll do! I'll beat them, I tell you! I'll beat them!

Mrs. GILMORE—You'll accept Worthing's offer.

GILMORE—But I can't! I won't! Please don't ask me!

Mrs. GILMORE—You must, you must! You'll accept it now, before it's too late. (*Crosses to 'phone.*)

GILMORE—Please, please don't! Think what this means to you, to me, to all of us! I won't do it, I tell you!

Mrs. GILMORE (*at 'phone*)—Hello! Central 180.

GILMORE—It's too late now! I refused Worthing's offer! He won't let me accept it!

Mrs. GILMORE—Yes, yes, he will.

GILMORE—Can't I make you understand? Please listen to reason. Don't ask me to do the thing I dread, the thing I despise. THE IMMUNITY BATH won't cleanse me. It'll further disgrace all of us, I tell you.

Mrs. GILMORE—It will avoid needless disgrace and shame. Marie missed you so much while you were away. Think how she will miss you if—think how I will have to lie and scheme to shield the truth from her. Think what it will mean to her future, to Florence's future, if you, their father, go to prison.

GILMORE—No, for God's sake, don't! Let me fight! I want to fight! I must fight! I'll win if you give me the chance! I want to fight, I tell you!

Mrs. GILMORE—Hello! Who is this? Just a minute. (*Rises and looks at husband.*) Mr. Worthing wants to speak to you.

GILMORE—For God's sake, don't insist! Tell him you made a mistake! There's no one here wants to speak to him! He hasn't the right to make the offer! He's doing away with the punishment, defeating the will of the people!

Mrs. GILMORE—It means me, it means the children.

GILMORE—No, no! Don't say that! Don't put it that way! There's no one wants to speak to Worthing, no one here wants to speak to him! Let me fight it out! Please stand by me and fight with me!

Mrs. GILMORE—If you had a chance to win, yes. But you haven't, and you must avoid the penitentiary. If you want me and the children you must avoid it.

GILMORE—You, you my wife, make me a welcher, a cur, a coward, because I can't bear to lose you! Why did I steal? Why did I steal? God!

(*Gilmore puts his hands over his eyes, completely breaks down and slowly staggers to the telephone*)

AS THE CURTAIN FALLS.

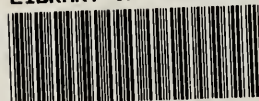






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